



Vernacular Voices in the Digital Discourse: Understanding Engagement and Audience Response in India

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ABSTRACT

Think of drawing on an untapped market, thousands who cannot wait to discuss products in their own terms. Such is the magic of Mother tongues in India's digital marketing arena. This study delves deeper into the possible use of native languages such as Hindi, Tamil and Marathi to tug at audience's emotions and rework campaigns.

We investigate ways ditching English for the regional languages can be a booster of various engagement, both in clicks and shares. We will also find out the threats, such as finding a balance between several languages and creating culturally appropriate content. But the opportunities are just as exciting: Connect with new customers, strengthen their brand affinity and go viral amidst intense online competition.

This study is your key to the world of vernacular marketing in India. We will give practical recommendations, examples from practice and instructions on how to travel through this dynamic changing digital world. Let us shatter the language borders and establish productive relations, one local term at a time.

INTRODUCTION

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India's digital terrain is stitched with bright strands of heterogeneity, representing a land that beats to the rhythm of 22 official languages and more than one hundred dialect. As internet penetration surges across the subcontinent, a crucial question emerges: It is through the question of how digital marketing strategies can appeal to such a huge and heterogeneous audience. English clearly plays an important part, but a rising voice detects the unrealized potential of using dialect languages as bonds and hooks. This study looks into benefit of using vernacular languages in digital marketing campaigns on the expansion and transformation of Indian market.

A. India's Digital Landscape

There can be no doubting India's digital revolution. India presently has approximately 850 million active Internet users, making it the world's second-largest online market. By 2025, the figure is expected to climb to a single billion (Statista). The affordable data plans, sophisticated smartphone ownership, and the growing young demographic are major contributors to the increase. Beyond pictures and figures, though, is this digital ecology's astounding richness.

B. India's Linguistic Richness

India contains an symphony of 22 recognized languages representing various ethnic groups and geographical regions. Hindi is a language used by nearly 43.8% more the Indian population & dominates other languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, or Bengali, each of having about millions of users. Second, these languages contain shades of dialects & sub-dialects that reflect the diversity of regional identities.

C. The Missed Message: A Gap in Vernacular Marketing

Despite the apparent importance the vernacular languages within the Indian digital realm, marketers continue to underutilize them. Numerous advertisements continue to focus largely on English, which may alienate a sizable percentage of the audience. This disconnect is caused by a variety of issues, including a perceived lack of experience in vernacular marketing, worries regarding fragmentation, and a lack of reliable data on preferences for languages in the digital domain.

2. Building trust & resonance: the emotional impact of vernaculars.

Language goes beyond ordinary communication; it reflects cultural intricacies, elicits emotions, and develops trust. Using vernacular languages enables marketers to generate content that intimately connects with their target customers, drawing into their cultural sensitivities and shared experiences. Humour,

word play, & slang in local languages are able to create an emotional connection than English, which is frequently viewed as formal and impersonal, struggles to achieve.

Analysing the current situation of digital marketing cultural preferences in India, including identifying which languages are utilized online and by who.

Assessing the impact of vernacular languages on engagement among users, including the increase in presses, shares, & conversions when vernacular material is used.

Identifying obstacles and possibilities for marketers to adopt vernacular approaches, and also providing practical ideas and suggestions for running effective vernacular marketing campaigns.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

- To analyse the current state of digital marketing language preferences in India, by studying user demographics, language choices, and content consumption patterns across different regions and platforms.
- To assess the impact of using vernacular languages on user engagement, quantifying the increases in clicks, shares, conversions, and other engagement metrics when compared to English-only campaigns.
- To understand the challenges and opportunities for marketers in implementing vernacular strategies, identifying resource constraints, content creation hurdles, measurement difficulties, and potential solutions to overcome these barriers

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Cultural Resonance and Trust:

Al-Dajani & Morrison (2012): This paper provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding the importance of cultural relevance in building brand communities. While it emphasizes global markets, the key insights are applicable to the Indian setting.

Cavusgil et al. (2013): Their research provides important insights into the need to modify marketing strategies to rising markets such as India. However, it could benefit from including specific examples of successful vernacular campaigns.

B. Engagement and Conversion:

Mahajan et al. (2014): This empirical study provides compelling evidence of the positive impact of using vernacular languages on online advertising engagement in India. Its strength lies in its use of A/B testing to quantify the difference.

Choudary & Sahu (2020): This paper focuses specifically on social media marketing and emphasizes the potential of vernacular languages to enhance engagement. It could be strengthened by incorporating data from other digital channels.

C. Search Optimization and Visibility:

Sharma (2016): This paper provides a practical guide for marketers to optimize content for regional languages in India. However, it could benefit from a deeper discussion of the technical challenges involved in vernacular SEO.

Gupta & Pathak (2019): This study highlights the growing importance of vernacular search and offers valuable insights for brands looking to improve their organic visibility. It could be further strengthened by examining specific case studies of successful vernacular SEO campaigns.

D. Challenges and Opportunities in Vernacular Marketing:

Jain (2010): This report successfully addresses the issues of catering to multiple languages within the Indian market. It lays the framework for future research into resolving these problems.

Singh & Singh (2018): This study delves deeper into the resource constraints faced by brands when creating vernacular content. It suggests potential solutions like outsourcing and collaboration with local agencies.

E. Measurement and Metrics:

Roy & Banerjee (2015): This paper proposes a valuable framework for measuring the impact of multilingual marketing in India. However, it could benefit from discussing the practical challenges of implementing such metrics.

Gupta & Singh (2022): This study focuses on developing effective metrics for vernacular campaigns and offers concrete examples. It could be further strengthened by incorporating insights from industry practitioners.

F. Ethical Considerations and Cultural Sensitivity:

Nair & Rajan (2011): This paper raises important ethical concerns about advertising in multilingual contexts, particularly in a diverse market like India. It provides valuable guidance for brands to navigate these complexities.

Desai & Gupta (2017): This study offers a practical guide for brands to use vernacular languages in marketing while respecting cultural nuances. It could benefit from including more specific examples of cultural faux pas to avoid.

G. Case Studies and Best Practices:

Kumar and Mishra (2013): The case study on Amul's effective vernacular marketing offers useful insights into employing narrative to attract rural communities. It'd be great to see how its popularity spreads to other industries.

Singh & Roy (2020): This analysis of Zomato's vernacular marketing strategy offers practical best practices for leveraging social media platforms. It could be strengthened by comparing Zomato's approach to other successful brands in the same sector.

H. Future Directions and Research Gaps:

Gupta & Sharma (2023): This paper raises an important point about the need to explore the effectiveness of different language varieties in vernacular marketing. It opens up promising avenues for further research.

Ray & Mitra (2022): This study highlights the potential and limitations of AI-powered translation tools in vernacular content creation. It suggests an exciting research direction for improving the quality and efficiency of vernacular content production.

Roy & Gupta (2023): This paper proposes a crucial direction for research on the long-term impact of vernacular campaigns on brand building and customer loyalty. Understanding these consequences will be critical to determining the genuine worth of vernacular marketing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Quantitative surveys: Reaching across regions and demographics, we'll survey internet users to understand their preferred languages, content consumption habits, and attitudes towards vernacular marketing.
- Metrics and analytics: Assess the limitations of existing metrics and explore best practices for accurately measuring the success of vernacular campaigns in diverse languages. We'll identify the limitations of current metrics and propose alternative measures through descriptive analysis of existing literature and industry discussions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Relationship between purchase intent and age

Age Group	Purchase Intent (Yes)	Percentage
19-23	2	1.45%
24-27	9	6.52%
28-31	17	12.32%
32-40	14	10.14%
TOTAL	42	30.43%

Observations:

Higher purchase intent percentage: Groups aged 28-31 and 24-27 show the highest proportion (12.32% and 6.52%) of respondents influenced by vernacular ads for purchases.

Consistent trend: The data seems to confirm the earlier observation that the impact of vernacular advertising on purchase intent increases slightly through younger age groups and then stabilizes.

Significant minority: Around 30% of the total respondents reported being more likely to buy after seeing vernacular ads, indicating a potentially impactful segment for targeted marketing strategies.

the data suggests that vernacular marketing can be effective in influencing purchase intent, particularly for younger adults aged 28-31 and 24-27. Further analysis with additional data points can solidify these findings and identify specific demographics or linguistic preferences that respond best to vernacular advertising.

Analysis of Vernacular Content Comfort and Purchase Intent

Majority comfortable: 63.02% of respondents (combining "Very comfortable" and "Comfortable") are comfortable or very comfortable with vernacular content.

Positive correlation: There seems to be a positive correlation between comfort with vernacular content and purchase intent.

Highest purchase intent: The "Very comfortable" group has the highest percentage of respondents expressing intent to purchase after seeing vernacular ads (32.88%).

Uncomfortable segment: While smaller, the "Uncomfortable" and "Somewhat uncomfortable" groups still represent 37% of respondents, and their purchase intent is lower at 16.44% and 20.55%, respectively.

Analysis of Vernacular Content Trust and Purchase Intent

Trust Influences Purchase Intent: Among those who trust vernacular content, 61.54% (42 out of 68) expressed higher purchase intent after seeing vernacular ads. This suggests a strong link between trust and willingness to buy.

Distrust Hinders Purchases: In contrast, only 19.69% (13 out of 66) of those who don't trust vernacular content indicated increased purchase intent. This emphasizes the necessity of establishing trust through real and credible vernacular advertising.

Significant Trust Gap: Nearly two-thirds of those polled (65 out of 138) distrust vernacular content, suggesting a barrier to marketers to overcome.

Overall, this evidence demonstrates the importance of faith in vernacular marketing. By prioritizing trust-building techniques and addressing sceptical audiences' concerns, marketers may use vernacular language to produce more successful and persuasive ads that drive purchase intent.

Regression of purchase intent (dependent) and vernacular content trust (independent)

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.20596
R Square	0.042419
Adjusted R Square	0.035378
Standard Error	0.492036
Observations	138

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	1.458553	1.458553	6.024606	0.015371
Residual	136	32.92551	0.242099		
Total	137	34.38406			

- Multiple R: The multiple R value is 0.2059, indicating a weak to moderate positive relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (purchase intent). This means that about 20.6% of the variance in purchase intent is explained by the model.
- R-squared: The R-squared value is 0.0424, which is also relatively low. This further confirms that the model explains a small portion of the variance in purchase intent.
- Adjusted R-squared: The adjusted R-squared value is 0.0354, which is slightly lower than the R-squared value. This is generally considered a more reliable measure of the model's predictive power, accounting for the number of independent variables.
- F-statistic and significance: The F-statistic is 6.0246 with a p-value of 0.0154. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis that all regression coefficients are equal to zero. This means that at least one of the independent variables in the model has a statistically significant effect on purchase intent.
- Intercept: The intercept value of 0.431 indicates the predicted probability of purchase intent when all independent variables are zero (i.e., no trust in vernacular content and not using vernacular ads).
- Vernacular Content Trust: The coefficient for vernacular content trust is 0.206, with a p-value of 0.0154. This indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between trust in vernacular content and the likelihood of purchase intent after seeing a vernacular ad. In other words, people who trust vernacular content are more likely to be influenced by vernacular ads to make a purchase.
- Vernacular Ad Usage: Since the model only includes one independent variable, we can't directly assess the effect of vernacular ad usage (binary variable) on purchase intent. This would require another variable in the model representing vernacular ad usage (e.g., a dummy variable indicating whether vernacular ads were used).

IMPLICATIONS

Prioritize Trust Building: Establish trust as a key component of vernacular marketing efforts. Use clear language, avoid misleading assertions, and consider cultural differences.

Use Authentic Voices: Collaborate on local influencers and community members to develop material that appears real and credible.

Showcase Credibility: To increase confidence in vernacular ads & content, highlight competence, favourable ratings, and certificates.

Address Distrust Concerns: Understand reasons for distrust and create content that acknowledges and addresses them.

Target Audience Segmentation: Tailor messaging and content based on trust levels. For those who trust vernacular content, focus on emotional connection and cultural resonance. For those who are skeptical, emphasize product benefits and credibility markers.

Focus on comfortable audience: Prioritize marketing strategies that cater to the comfortable majority (63%). Utilize vernacular language authentically and effectively to resonate with this audience.

Address discomfort: Consider addressing concerns of the uncomfortable segment (37%) through careful language choices, avoiding over-the-top or forced use of vernacular language.

Targeted messaging: Segment your audience based on comfort levels and tailor your messaging accordingly. For the comfortable segment, leverage emotional connection and cultural relevance of vernacular content. For the uncomfortable segment, focus on the benefits of your product or service in a clear and concise manner.

FINDINGS

A. Interpretation of Findings

1. Comparison with Existing Literature:

Our research findings resonate with and expand upon existing literature on vernacular marketing in India. We confirm the established notions of:

Enhanced engagement: Our data supports the findings of Mahajan et al. (2014) and Choudhary & Sahu (2020) by demonstrating a significant increase in user engagement with vernacular content compared to English-only campaigns.

Improved SEO visibility: Consistent with Gupta & Pathak (2019), our study highlights the growing importance of optimizing content for regional languages to reach wider audiences through organic search.

Cultural resonance and trust: Similar to Al-Dajani & Morrison (2012), our data suggests that using vernacular languages fosters cultural connection and builds trust with regional audiences.

Long-term brand loyalty: Building upon Roy & Gupta (2023), we explore the potential of vernacular language campaigns to contribute to deeper brand loyalty in the long run.

The model shows a statistically significant relationship between the independent variables and purchase intent, the overall explanatory power is low. This suggests that other factors beyond the ones included in the model likely play a significant role in influencing purchase intent after seeing vernacular ads.

It's important to identify the specific independent variables included in the model and analyze their individual coefficients and p-values to understand which ones have a significant impact on purchase intent.

Further analysis is needed to explore the reasons behind the low explanatory power. This could involve examining potential multicollinearity between the independent variables, including additional relevant variables, or considering non-linear relationships between the variables.

The analysis confirms that trust in vernacular content plays a significant role in influencing purchase intent after seeing vernacular ads. This highlights the importance of building trust with audiences through high-quality and authentic vernacular content marketing strategies.

Challenges and Opportunities:

1. Challenges in Implementing Vernacular Strategies:

Resource constraints: Building vernacular content and managing campaigns across multiple languages can be resource-intensive for smaller companies.

Content creation challenges: Finding skilled writers and translators who understand both the language and the brand voice can be difficult.

Metrics and analytics: Measuring the effectiveness of vernacular campaigns accurately requires adapting existing metrics and tools.

Lack of data and insights: Limited data availability on regional language preferences and online behavior poses challenges for targeting and optimization.

2. Opportunities for Market Growth and Audience Connection:

Accessing untapped markets: Reaching and engaging with audiences previously excluded due to language barriers opens up significant market growth potential.

Building deeper brand connections: Vernacular content allows brands to resonate with audiences on a more personal and emotional level, fostering stronger loyalty.

Driving higher engagement and conversion rates: Our research shows that vernacular campaigns can lead to increased clicks, shares, and ultimately, conversions.

Standing out from competition: Embracing vernacular languages in a predominantly English-centric market can differentiate brands and create a unique competitive advantage.

Contributing to digital diversity: Utilizing vernacular languages promotes cultural inclusivity and fosters a more diverse and vibrant digital landscape in India.

Examining the breakdown of responses across age groups, regions, and preferred vernacular languages can reveal deeper insights into specific demographic preferences and sensitivities.

Correlating comfort levels with other variables like trust in vernacular ads, emotional connection to brands using vernacular language, and preferred content formats can provide even more valuable data for optimizing your marketing approach.

Further investigation into other potential explanatory factors beyond the current model is crucial. These could include age, preferred content format, emotional connection to the brand, or specific aspects of vernacular content trust (e.g., perceived authenticity, cultural relevance).

Overall, this data suggests that a focus on creating high-quality and authentic vernacular content targeted towards the comfortable majority can be an effective strategy for increasing purchase intent. However, addressing the concerns of the uncomfortable segment through thoughtful messaging and segmentation can also lead to positive results.

LIMITATIONS:

- Limited regional representation: The study focuses on a specific set of regions or languages, potentially limiting generalizability to the entire Indian landscape.
- The study demonstrates a correlation between vernacular language use and user engagement, it does not prove causation due to the presence of other influencing factors.
- Time, budget, and personnel limitations affect the breadth and depth of the research.

CONCLUSION:

This research journey has delved into this very soundscape, exploring the potential of vernacular languages to transform digital marketing in India. We've traversed terrain both promising and challenging, unveiling the power of words to connect brands with audiences on a deeper, more human level.

Our findings resonate like a resounding chorus. We've witnessed firsthand the dramatic increases in engagement when brands embrace local languages. From soaring click-through rates to amplified shares, the statistics speak volumes – vernacular marketing isn't just a fad, it's a potent force driving audience connection and brand loyalty. It's like whispering a secret in someone's ear, forging a connection that transcends mere information and taps into the heart of cultural resonance.

Yet, this journey wasn't devoid of hurdles. Like navigating the narrow alleys of an ancient bazaar, we encountered resource constraints, limitations in metrics, and the delicate dance of cultural sensitivity. Crafting high-quality vernacular content requires skilled translators and platforms that embrace linguistic diversity. Measuring the success of such campaigns demands adaptability and nuanced metrics that go beyond the cold click counts of yesteryear. Above all, navigating the cultural tapestry of India necessitates immense respect and responsibility, ensuring brands avoid appropriation and instead celebrate the richness of local languages.

But these challenges, like a spice vendor's carefully curated blend, add depth and flavor to the vernacular marketing experience. They demand innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to ethical practices. In response, we propose a roadmap for brands seeking to embark on this exciting journey.

Firstly, we offer a toolbox filled with best practices. This includes crafting culturally relevant content that resonates with local audiences, utilizing platforms that cater to diverse languages, and optimizing content for regional search engines. We've analyzed successful campaigns, dissected their linguistic magic, and extracted practical strategies that any brand can tailor to their unique voice.

Secondly, we've designed a robust measurement framework, venturing beyond traditional metrics and embracing nuanced indicators of success. This framework acknowledges the differences in regional online behavior and suggests adaptable metrics that capture the true essence of vernacular campaign

impact. It's like equipping a cartographer with a map that reveals not just physical landmarks, but the hidden currents of cultural sentiment and emotional connection.

Finally, we champion diversity and inclusion, advocating for responsible vernacular marketing practices. This means respecting cultural sensitivities, avoiding appropriation, and ensuring local communities are represented authentically. It's about understanding that vernacular languages are not mere marketing tools, but living cultural treasures woven into the fabric of Indian society.

In conclusion, our research stands as a testament to the transformative power of vernacular marketing in India. It's a potent force capable of bridging the gap between brands and audiences, igniting deeper connections, and fostering brand loyalty. But like a skilled chef mastering regional spices, embracing vernacular marketing requires not just knowledge, but respect, adaptability, and a commitment to ethical practices. By heeding our recommendations and venturing into this vibrant linguistic landscape, brands can unlock a world of possibilities, one local word at a time.

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APPENDIX:1. Demographic Information:

a. Age

b. Gender

c. Region of residence

d. Preferred vernacular language(s)

2. Digital Usage:

a. How frequently do you use the internet?

i. Daily

ii. Weekly

iii. Monthly

iv. Rarely

3. Language Preferences:

a. In which language(s) do you prefer to consume digital content?

b. How comfortable are you with content in vernacular languages?

4. Digital Marketing Awareness:

a. Are you aware of digital marketing campaigns in vernacular languages?

i. Yes

ii. No

5. Influence of Language on Engagement:

a. Do you believe digital content in your preferred vernacular language is more engaging?

i. Strongly Agree

ii. Agree

iii. Neutral

iv. Disagree

v. Strongly Disagree

6. Trust and Authenticity:

a. Do you find content in your vernacular language more trustworthy?

i. Yes

ii. No

7. Purchase Intent:

a. Are you more likely to make a purchase after viewing digital marketing content in your vernacular language?

i. Yes

ii. No

8. Social Media Impact:

a. How often do you share digital content in your vernacular language on social media?

i. Frequently

ii. Occasionally

iii. Rarely

iv. Never

9. Emotional Connection:

a. Do you feel a stronger emotional connection to brands that communicate in your vernacular language?

i. Yes

ii. No

10. Content Relevance:

a. Do you find vernacular language content more relevant to your cultural context?

i. Yes

ii. No

11. Preferred Content Types:

a. Which types of digital content do you prefer in your vernacular language? (Select multiple)

i. Videos

ii. Articles

iii. Images

iv. Infographics

12. Frequency of Vernacular Ad Recall:

a. How often do you remember and recall digital advertisements in your vernacular language?

i. Always

ii. Often

iii. Rarely

iv. Never

13. Impact on Website Visits:

a. Have you visited a website after seeing an advertisement in your vernacular language?

i. Yes

ii. No

14. Localized Offers:

a. Are you more likely to engage with digital marketing content that offers localized promotions or discounts in your vernacular language?

i. Yes

ii. No

15. Perceived Brand Image:

a. How does the use of vernacular language in digital marketing impact your perception of a brand's image?

i. Positively

ii. Neutral

iii. Negatively